

# School Fire Drills

## *A step-by-step guide for teachers*

School fire drills are held in order to provide for the safety and well being of students and staff. Fire codes address many aspects of life safety, including emergency evacuation drills at least once each month during school session in accordance with International Fire Code Section 404 Fire Safety and Evacuation Plans adopted by WAC 212.12. Actively participating in monthly evacuation drills can provide a safer learning environment for children.

### 1 Plan Ahead

- ☐ **Know your school district's policy.**  
Most school districts include the following: an assigned meeting place for students; individual class rosters so that students can be accounted for; that windows and doors be closed to prevent the spread of fire; and provisions for assigning an adult assistant or a student buddy to assist classmates with special needs.
- ☐ **Know your school's fire protection system.**  
Be familiar with the type of fire protection system at your school. Know the location of pull stations and whether your school is protected by fire sprinklers.
- ☐ **Know the alarm sound.**  
Learn your school fire alarm's sound so you can respond quickly.
- ☐ **Know the school floor plan.**  
Every room in your school should have a map posted showing at least two ways out so you can escape, even if one exit is blocked. Know alternate routes of escape.
- ☐ **Know the escape plan.**  
Time is a critical factor in a fire emergency. Learn which exit to use. It's important to know exactly what to do when the fire alarm sounds. Elevators should never be used during a fire.

### 2

### Discuss Procedures with Students

- ☐ **Be orderly.**  
Students should know how to quietly line up and leave the room when the alarm sounds.
- ☐ **Test doors before opening.**  
Kneel or crouch and feel the door. If the door is warm, use another escape route. If it is cool, open it slowly. Be prepared to close the door if there is smoke or flame on the other side.
- ☐ **Crawl low under smoke.**  
Since heat rises and carries toxic smoke with it, the air will be cooler and cleaner near the floor during a fire. If you find smoke, try another escape route. If you must exit through smoke, crawl on your hands and knees and keep your head 12 to 24 inches above the floor.
- ☐ **Know where you're going.**  
Know which exit to use and go to the assigned meeting place outside the building.
- ☐ **Helping others.**  
Plan for students who need special help leaving the building. Discuss these procedures with the class.

### 3

### Practice

- ☐ **Monthly Emergency Evacuation Drills.** IFC 405.1 and 405.2  
Evacuation drills are required at least once each month during the school year. No one should re-enter the building until directed by a designated person.
- ☐ **Home Fire Drills.**  
School fire drills are a model for children to use in their own homes. Home fire escape plans are important and should be practiced at least once a year. In Washington State, 76 percent of all fire deaths happen in the home. Practice is essential.